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THE SIGNIFICANCE OF PAUL FOR MODERN CHRISTIANS

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The title of this article has been formulated for me by the editors. Otherwise I should perhaps not have had the courage to undertake the task of giving a satisfactory answer to this question, for I am all too conscious of its difficulty. What connotation has the term "significance" in this question? Is it meant to ask whether Paul still contributes to personal religious life, to Christian preaching, and to devotional Scripture reading? Now, the majority of the real believers, to whom the Scripture means light and bread of life, will indignantly object to the raising of this question. They will decline to take upon themselves the scientific burden of the inquiry as to whether and to what extent Paul may be regarded as leader, admonisher, and consoler. The quest of the heart seeking for help and edification cannot be mathematically stated. It makes claims in regions which a strictly historical judgment does not reach, it keeps in touch with the treasures of religion, it has its own norms, it is self-adjusting, it discerns undertones and overtones of which no interpreter ever thought. In short, for actual piety the problem stated above does not exist. And yet piety is in truth the most uncompromising of critics. With wholesome discernment it eliminates what it cannot appropriate, all unconscious of the radical nature and subjectivity of its procedure. It would be a tremendous task to ascertain by methods of exact inquiry just how far Paul is a vital power in our modern churches.

Since we cannot employ the method of religious experimental psychology only, we are compelled to pursue another course, namely to formulate the problem somewhat differently. Several possibilities are open. We may ask the question recently much discussed, What is the relation of Paul to Jesus? Does he really, as many assume, represent a wholly new type of religion, which is

related not inwardly but only externally to Jesus?¹ Or is he, notwithstanding all formal difference in his religious thought, nevertheless in reality the perpetuator of the religion of Jesus, being most sympathetically related to Jesus in inward experience, burning with the fire of Jesus' enthusiasm and so his best interpreter, although employing a wholly different language?² When the question is put this way, the religion of Jesus, or at least his fundamental experience, is treated as essential Christianity, as the normal type of Christian life, which must be present wherever the name Christian is accurately and sincerely used.³ This question is worthy of further investigation and our discussion will repeatedly touch upon it. But the subject assigned me is concerned not with Jesus but solely with Paul.

Even with this limitation it may be variously conceived. One may ask: Are there, in the preaching of Paul and in his religion, thoughts, motives, forms of experience which, quite immediately, without any historical mediation or any theological reflexion, without alteration or transposition, can be organically incorporated into the mode of thinking and the religious life of the modern Christian? Can this be done without losing religious effectiveness and without conflicting with the modern Christian's appreciation and interpretation of the world? Or does Paul have vital significance for the modern Christian only in so far as the churches are educated to a historical-psychological understanding of his world of ideas and of his religious life? Must they be guided by eliminating certain items or by an aesthetic interpretation involving their rethinking in terms of a modern world-view so as to give modern expression to what is antique and strange, transforming what has been outlived into eternally vital truth with universal appeal?

A person who thinks historically will immediately say the latter is the only method by which we can inwardly approach, not only Paul, but any great personality of the past. There is absolutely no great personality of history, though he stand much nearer to us than Paul in time, race, and speech, with whose inward life

¹ So, e.g., Wrede, *Paulus* ("Religionsgeschichtliche Volksbücher"), Tübingen, 1905.

² So, e.g., J. Weiss, *Paulus und Jesus*, Berlin, 1909.

³ This, e.g., is the main idea in Harnack's *Das Wesen des Christentums*.

we can, without further ado, come into vital contact. Even Luther, however closely related we feel ourselves to him, and however much we live upon his religious language, is immensely removed from us in his innermost experience, and in his mediaeval thinking. How much farther removed is Paul, where in addition to the antique mode of thought we have the further barrier of a dark and difficult language. Without historical understanding of Paul and the consequent revolutionizing and limiting of his thought, without a translation and substitution, we shall make no progress, if we aim at complete accuracy and fundamental clearness. I mention only a few points in which the great difference between his thinking and ours stands out with especial clearness.

1. The entire outline of his conception of the world and of his scheme of redemption appears to us *mythological*. His monotheism is stretched on a dualistic frame. "The God of this world," Satan, the "principalities and powers" hostile to God, the personal "elements of the world" which stand over against God, are for Paul by no means abstract phantoms; they are potent realities that must be set aside and brought to naught (*καταργεῖσθαι*) before the actual dominion of God can be established and God be all in all. And the work of redemption is a mighty dramatic conflict between God and these supermundane forces. After their seeming triumph over Christ in the crucifixion, God in the resurrection of Christ exhibited this triumph over them, and the exalted Christ as God's dictator is to subject them completely to God. The redemption of the Christian is by no means mere forgiveness of sins or simply sonship to God, but is release from the powers of the *kosmos* by which humanity before Christ was held in slavery. By Christ's descent from heavenly spheres into the realm of the cosmic-saric servitude, and by the redemption secured through his death struggle, he has sundered for his own the bond between world, flesh, and sin. Practically everything in this mode of thinking is strange to us today. We regard it as simply a bit of "gnosis." If this means anything to us its meaning appears only as we gather up the variegated details of that picture into the abstract thought that we too believe that God's will is now and forever the ultimate triumphant power in the world.

2. Paul's entire teaching consists of a theology of *evangelization* and *conversion*, constructed by a man whose life-history was divided, by his violent conversion, into two sharply contrasted parts. On the farther side of the line lay only misery, unhappiness and sin, servitude and error; on this side joy, peace, blessedness, strength, purity, and truth. Everything is related to that one moment in his experience which determined all his later life. He experienced redemption as a sharply isolated event. Moreover, the churches which he indoctrinates and instructs consist only of people who likewise by a break in their experience have come over to Christianity from another religion and from wholly different habits of life. This shows itself even in language. The principal religious concepts take the form of verbal substantives or are expressed by verbs in the past tense: e.g., redemption, forgiveness, justification, justified, freed, called, sanctified (*ἀπολύτρωσις, ἄφεσις, δικαίωσις; δικαιωθέντες, ἐλευθερωθέντες, κληθέντες, ἡγιασμένοι*). The majority of present-day Christians, who grow up under the preaching of the gospel and under Christian training, have nothing analogous to this definitive experience. There are indeed exceptions as in the case of "conversion" from a life practically pagan. But most of us have never experienced justification as a single unique experience; we live in constant consciousness of the divine grace; we daily ask and receive forgiveness of sins; our "calling" dates from childhood, and we regard sanctification as a lasting task of self-discipline rather than as a single unique gift of divine grace. This notion of sonship to God furnishes the clearest illustration of this difference. In the case of Paul sonship is regarded as the specific act of adoption of men who previously were not children of God. We, however, are conscious of our sonship to God—in Jesus' sense of the term—as we are of the all-embracing and ever-present sunshine, to which we owe life and happiness, so that we have only to make use of it.

Thus we can appropriate the chief conceptions of the Pauline thinking only by giving them a new significance.

3. The greatest difference is to be found in connection with the conception of the *divine spirit*. For Paul the bestowing of the spirit is a vividly definite experience: the pneumatic person is

sharply distinguished from the non-pneumatic. The spirit which is communicated, however, is something quite objective, not blending in any way with the inner life of the Christian. "The spirit" stands distinct from and alien to our "spirit" (Rom. 8:16). Its witness, its cry of Abba (Rom. 8:15; Gal. 4:5, 6) is a proceeding which the Christian, as it were, observes as a listener; he himself has no influence upon it. Precisely upon this complete objectivity rests the evidential force of that witness so that the Christian may regard himself as a child of God; the love of God as a consciously received blessed possession is shed abroad in our hearts through the spirit which is given us; in other words, *through the fact* that the spirit is given us, we possess an earnest of the divine love in our hearts. The form of the representation here is quite ancient, animistic, primitive. It is a second spiritual essence in the Christian. Another explanation of Paul's doctrine of the spirit may be derived from Hellenistic philosophical mysticism. Here the spirit of God appears as a force (*δύναμις*)¹ communicated from the essence of God to the inner life of man by which man is in a higher sense essentially united with God and Christ. Christ himself is blended with him in a unity of mystic life. If in the former primitive way of thinking, the spirit was represented as a sort of personal *Daemon* here, on the contrary the personal representation of God and Christ is on the point of being dissipated into the pantheistic conception of a divine fluid or of the Stoic world-soul.² In both cases, however, there is here a fundamental conception which we can no longer appropriate. If we say that we receive the spirit of God, we think in that connection of a strengthening, purifying, and exaltation of the powers of our own soul gained through prayer, or through the steadfast exercise of volitional faith

¹ The essence of this conception of divine *δυνάμεις* is pictorially shown in certain Egyptian representations where the king appears sacrificing, and the power of the sun-god is conveyed to the king on the rays of the sun with outstretched hands, one of the hands holding the symbol of life beneath the king's nose (cf., e.g., Gressmann, *Texte und Bilder*, p. 66; Erman, pp. 65 ff.). Here a wholly primitive conception (the god gives life to the king) comes in contact with a more highly abstract one (the king is quite immediately united with the god through the *δυνάμεις* that radiate from him—to use a technical figure, he is "connected up" with the god).

² Cf. my *Christus, die Anfänge des Dogmas*, Tübingen, 1909.

in God. We think in terms of psychological immanence and thereby give a new significance to the primitive as well as to the mystical thought.

These are simply a few instances of the fact that it is only by dint of a transposition that we can appropriate to ourselves even the fundamental religious thoughts of the apostle. For the most part that transposition takes place unconsciously; the theologian, however, must know what he is doing. He must in this connection be clear in principle. Just as in the above instances, so for the whole of Paul's religion, it can continue to be vital for the modern Christian only in a very modified form. Indeed, it may fairly be asked whether a religious attitude which originated so many centuries ago and is expressed in such unfamiliar forms of thought can today lay any inspiring claims on men. This question we venture to answer in the affirmative, and to justify our answer at least in certain respects, namely, in Paul's conception of God, in his teaching of the fundamental religious relation to God, in his Christ-mysticism, and in his ethics.

1. Paul's *belief in God* has, theologically considered, various sources, and therefore various constituent elements. To mention the chief elements, side by side with the Old Testament prophetic conceptions stand the new traits which he owes to his Christian experience. We must not forget, however, the by no means unimportant Hellenistic influence which had come to Paul from contact with the Stoic conception of God.¹

a) This last item seems to me very important for the present time, since it has played an extraordinary rôle in the history of theology. The revelation of God in the works of creation (Rom. 1:19 f.), represented by Paul as an insufficiently heeded original possession of humanity, and viewed in the scheme of Christian dogmatics through the centuries as the foundation of religion—this is a conception, which, in our age of natural science, is destined to play a new rôle, although this new function has not yet been adequately worked out. Notwithstanding the fact that certain modern theological points of view, as for example, Ritschl's, regard this

¹ For this conception of God see especially Posidonius, the pseudo-Aristotelian work *On the World*.

religious conception as something of minor worth or as an illusion, it cannot be denied that for many there is here a way to God, which we should carry to completion. Exactly as Paul in his missionary preaching employed that conception to establish a connection with cultured heathenism, so in the case of modern Christianity does it form a medium of mutual understanding between the preacher and his scientifically thinking audience. From a higher point of view it is no harm if this thought easily assumes a pantheistic form, as is manifestly the case in the Areopagus address of Acts (17:23-28). One who is concerned with the awakening of religious experience should not be so narrow-minded as to condition this awakening on the affirmation of the doctrine of a personal God. Pantheism may, indeed, have its limitations and its defects, yet, without doubt, it lies very near to our time, inspired as it is by both scientific and artistic ideas. Why should we not recognize this form of religious life alongside of other forms, in case it finds vital expression in emotion and action? From the standpoint of Paul at least the above attitude cannot be very strongly opposed, for he (in his Christ-Pneuma doctrine) comes very close to pantheistic representations. But, of course, his conception of God contains more than this.

b) Even in his extended criticism of Hellenistic rationalism (Rom. 1:18-2:10), he maintains with the greatest energy the ethical character of this cosmic God. With the revelation of God in nature Paul closely connected the revelation of God in the moral law which is written in the heart (Rom. 2:14). The same *voûs* with which one recognizes the creator-god in his works (Rom. 1:19) is also the organ for the "Law of God" (Rom. 7:22 f.). Here also even if one holds, from the standpoint of ethics, that there is no innate moral consciousness, and that "conscience" is something that has come into being historically, yet as a matter of fact there lies in our humanity—in spite of all confusion—a fund of moral perception, a deposit of the consciousness that the world and man are constituted for the good. We are not so rich in moral-religious values that we may neglect this starting-point for the development of the higher life. Whatever dogmatics may say of it, it is nevertheless to be regarded as fortunate that through Paul

these Stoic conceptions were rescued for the Christian church, and quietly continue to work frequently more effectively than essentially Christian ideas.

c) Possibly Paul's doctrine of providence may be regarded, at least in part, as a Hellenistic inheritance. It is true that the Stoic word "foreknowledge" (*πρόνοια*) does not occur in his writings. Take such an expression as Rom. 8:28, which he treats with his well-known *οἶδαμεν*, as a statement needing no further definition, i.e., as a quotation, "To those who love God all things work together for good." This suggests Hellenism rather than the Old Testament—at any rate it is not distinctively Pauline. It does not read "those whom God loves," which would be Pauline thought, but "those who love God," and it is striking that Paul in order to incorporate the sentence into his thought adds, "who are called according to purpose." Even the expression *πάντα συνεργεῖ εἰς τὸ ἀγαθόν* is Hellenistic (Polyb. xxxii:11, 14; Plut. *Eroticus*, xxiii, 769D). Above all, with this conception of the divine providence which first catches our attention there is mingled an immanent psychological element. Since love to God is the highest good, values and value-judgments so adjust themselves that everything we encounter must assist toward the good. However directly practical this idea is today, it is not the distinctly Pauline conception of providence.

At the center of Paul's conception stands rather the Old Testament prophetic conception of election to salvation, which necessarily determines all else (Rom. 8:29, 30, 31). Paul is particularly fond of the *sylogismus practicus a majore ad minus* (not only in Rom. 8:31; 5:6–20, but in other places explicitly or implicitly); after all that which we Christians have *already* experienced from the grace of God, especially after his great saving act in the sacrifice of his son, what we still lack and may still expect from him is something so relatively unimportant that it would be an affront to God not to ascribe this also to him. This is the well-known form of the Christian belief in providence which A. Ritschl taught us to regard as the real nucleus of the Christian religion; it rests not so much on belief in the creator-God, with the optimistic motto:

Was unser Gott geschaffen hat
Das wird er auch erhalten,

as it does upon the experience of redemption: "If God is for us, who is against us? He that spared not his own son, how shall he not also with him freely give us all things?" This is Paul's fundamental religious feeling, to which he gives expression in manifold ways; though I mention only the very indefinite expression, so difficult to translate, *καύχησης, καυχᾶσθαι* (e.g., Rom. 5:2). This might be translated religious emotion, confidence, rejoicing, "daring" toward God, as Luther says. Take again the passage, "Pressed on every side, yet not straitened, perplexed yet not unto despair, pursued yet not forsaken, smitten down yet not destroyed" (II Cor. 4:8 f.). Although this manly heroic courage in which the apostle had wrought and suffered much, this paradox of overcoming the world, may easily mingle a little of the self-conscious attitude of the Stoic sages with the purely religious attitude, nevertheless it remains forever the eternal soul of the Christian religion, and something of this joyfully daring, determined, and victorious attitude must be present wherever the name of Christianity is to be justified. This attitude is not to be confounded with the optimistic confidence of the *Aufklärung*—given its death blow through the modern world-view; this confidence rests upon the conviction, won from experience, that in our life there is a *plan*, not framed by us, which aims at our spiritual and moral perfection, and that all outward mischance, all limitation and humiliation in our experience, do not contradict the fact that *notwithstanding* and *nevertheless*, this good will which rules over us, in some way or other must attain its goal, if we yield ourselves in harmony with it. He who is really to experience this bold faith must of course, like Paul, have in his life some experiences of the fact that the *χάρις σωτήριος παιδεύουσα ἡμᾶς* protects him. He must have observed the traces of divine guidance in his life. Such inwardness, such attention to the significance of his own life, must of course be expected of one who interprets his religious life in the Pauline sense. We may recognize that so profound a religious experience as that of the apostle is not to be expected in the more superficial life of men in general. Only a few will attain it. I wish only to show that that *syllogismus practicus*, proceeding from the evidences of salvation already experienced to this still to be experienced in the future, is the inner

essence of this type of religion and must be present wherever it is to continue.

d) This belief in providence has as its basis the distinctively Christian conception of God, as set forth by the apostle under the influence of his thought of the advent and the loving sacrifice of Christ. In this conception of God *grace* is the predominant trait; this, however, does not mean the leniency of a benevolent human father, but the determined and invariable loving will to bring his elect to the fullest fellowship with himself, to "freedom" from transitoriness, from the bondage of the flesh and of sin to the "glory of the children of God." The forgiveness or remission of sins by God, the free declaration (*δωρεάν*) of justification, these are only a means to the above end. The removal of the alienation from God due to guilt is only a step toward the complete reconciliation (*καταλλαγή*), the most perfect peace, between God and man. This conception of God as the goal-conscious will-force which purposes our completest holiness, i.e., purity and godliness—this is the abiding outcome of the religious experience and thinking of Paul. If we are to continue to use the word Christianity, this conception must in some measure be present. Indeed, it may be said that wherever we find the belief that the meaning and goal of the world-process issues as described above, there Christianity in the Pauline sense exists, no matter how variously clothed or how changed in emphasis the thoughts may appear.

2. This brings us to the second main point, the *relation of man to God*, according to the Pauline conception. The crucial idea here is sharpened by the antipharisaic doctrine of justification—a doctrine foreign to us, since the occasion for it is no longer present in our world. We can and need no longer reckon with the Jewish doctrine of retribution, according to which man, on the basis of what he does, can and may meet the requirements of God (*καύχησις* in the Pharisaic sense, Rom. 3:27). So completely has Protestantism conquered in the sign of Paul, that no one will any longer seriously venture to affirm the principle that God is by virtue of his righteousness obliged to reward human action with salvation. We today are fully convinced that man in relation to God must be always the recipient, must be completely dependent upon him to whom prayer

and gratitude should be rendered but not boasting of one's own deeds. Even the new Christian *καύχησις*, of which we have spoken, has here its limits. How can it possibly exalt itself to an attitude of making demands, or to an actual defiance of God, without immediately losing its inner justification? That God freely bestows (*δωρεάν*) his salvation because of love and grace, not on the basis of strict justice, is the kernel of the doctrine of justification. We may disregard that scholastic-juristic form which was unavoidable for Paul, since he had to contend with Pharisaic Judaizers, and since this controversy forced him to choose between justification by works or justification by faith. Disregarding this we have left the thought of Jesus, that the kingdom of God belongs to those who are childlike, that it is intended for the poor, the hungry, the seekers, and that it excludes the scribes and all formalists who like the Pharisees in the parable pride themselves in the presence of God because of their works. Here we discover one of the most fundamental agreements between Paul and Jesus—an agreement which only a difference in terminology conceals. It is a misfortune that this thought, inherently so simple, should, for the modern man, be obscured by the Jewish-Pharisaic formulation of the problem of justification; that a *juristic* formula is used to express the fact that the relation between God and man is once for all to be removed from the sphere of the judicial.

The worst consequence is that this manner of statement makes faith continue to appear as a meritorious deed; that God fixes requirements on the basis of which man can claim salvation. Paul, however, says and means the precise opposite. It is one of the most important tasks of modern preaching and instruction, to make clear to Christian people the true meaning of the word faith. Faith is the opposite of achievement and works; it is self-surrender, a receptive attitude, a grateful willingness to be guided, a grasping of God's proffered hand, and a courageous surrender to his will.

If one understood today how to preach faith in this sense so as to evoke appreciation and confidence he would bring to honor and revive not only the Pauline conception but also the innermost meaning of the preaching of Jesus.

3. *Paul's faith in Christ and his Christ-mysticism*, if accurately

interpreted historically, will always remain foreign to many modern Christians. For Paul's relation to the exalted Lord is a thoroughly supernatural one, based upon prayer and miracle.

a) Practically considered, Paul stands related to the "Lord" as to God, from the "Lord" he expects "grace and peace" as from the heavenly father, to him he prays as to the almighty God, from him he receives supernatural power to work miracles; power and courage stream forth from him into Paul's heart, in suffering Paul experiences the victorious "life of Jesus," and in the conflict with sin the help of the spirit of Christ. There are, of course, many Christians who are convinced that they pray to the Lord Christ in just the same way, and stand in a living and fruitful relation with him. Our liturgical prayers, our language of worship constantly give new nourishment to this faith. Indeed, even the Christian interpretation of the Old Testament, as Paul practiced it, continues without interruption among us. "The Lord is my shepherd"—by how many is this psalm uttered and felt as a prayer to Christ! But we might profitably make further religious inquiry in order to determine how far this Christ-piety is the result of clear reflection, and whether this naïve modalism does not rest in reality upon a self-illusion. Is it actually Christ himself to whom the prayer is directed? Does not one in his prayer really think of God? Such an inquiry would probably lead to a variety of answers. There are undoubtedly many Protestant Christians who pray to Christ with full conviction and all earnestness, just as many Catholics think quite seriously of prayer to the Virgin and to the saints.

But there are also others who, when asked, will at first acknowledge a certain vagueness, and then proceed to make sharp distinctions. And on the whole the modern Christian will be inclined to give up prayer to Christ for prayer to the heavenly father. For the figure of the exalted Christ, even though theoretically affirmed, will never in the case of a Christian who thinks in modern terms obtain the immediately convincing force which it possessed for early Christians, especially for Paul. Apart from rationalistic objections, we are too much under the influence of the picture of Jesus in the Gospels, at any rate this influence is for us stronger

than for Paul. Thus the historical figure of the human Jesus, however divine and glorified it may be conceived to be, comes into the foreground. This figure will command reverence and trust, an ethical dependence, rather than a purely religious relation of prayer. Of course this attitude too may readily assume the form of prayer, but it is not properly prayer since it is distinguished from actual prayer to God. All this, as has been said, is true of the "modern" Christian. I do not deny that there are many Christians even today who, without any misgiving, pray to the exalted Christ. On the whole, however, the figure of the "Lord" for most Christians today means only the pressure of an accompanying companion warning, waking the conscience, comforting and stimulating, arousing reverence and honor—a living personal realization of the holy and gracious will of God. One may indeed call this a religious relationship, but in contrast with Paul's faith in Christ, however, the relation is emptied of value. In the place of the worship of the exalted Christ we have substituted an ethical religious relationship. The confession "Jesus lives" is meant by many Christians no longer in its proper transcendental and miraculous sense, but in the immanent sense that the figure of Jesus and his life of communion with God is felt as a moral force over our life from which we cannot escape. "Faith in Jesus" fundamentally means "following Jesus." This form of faith, indeed, is not lacking in the case of Paul. We must emphasize more strongly than we usually do his statement that he feels himself to be a *μυμητής* of Christ (I Cor. 11:1). To a greater degree than modern theology recognizes, Paul combines with his notion of the Exalted One the recognition of the man Jesus, who, "born of woman and subject to the law," "obedient even unto death" freely offered himself in love for us. But it is true that these latter ideas are by no means so significant to him as his distinctively religious Christ-piety, his worship of the Exalted One.¹

b) What we have said fits in with the predominant Christ-mysticism of Paul. However often the formula "In Christ" may be repeated in public and private worship, it is seldom employed in its precise historical sense. For to be "in Christ" means with

¹ Cf. my *Jesus im Glauben des Urchristentums*, Tübingen, 1910.

Paul a complete blending with the heavenly Lord into a mystic union, in which, indeed, the sharp outlines of the personal figure become blurred into the notion of an all-pervading Christ-spirit (II Cor. 3:17). It was possible for Paul metaphysically to equate the person of Christ with the impersonal *Pneuma*, because according to the ancient way of thinking in which he had grown up, the limits between abstraction and personality¹ were easily obliterated, and because the picture of the gospel tradition did not yet exercise upon him the force that it does upon us. But for this very reason genuine Christ-mysticism, that is that form of religious experience in which the personality of the Christians and of Christ blend together, will become a rarity. We should not be misled by the fact that this mystical formula like mystical music has an intoxicating effect on many people. I might almost say it exercises a musical magic so that men in an exalted religious mood yearn for these formulas. It is a question, however, whether the formula "in Christ" works such an experience as the phrase literally implies. Here again a religious inquiry, were one possible, would perhaps issue in a negative result.

But it is doubtful whether Paul himself took so seriously and literally the mystical formula derived from his Hellenistic environment,² as our interpretation maintains. It is very noteworthy, however, that in the passage where he expresses it most clearly and fundamentally (Gal. 2:20), "my *ego* no longer lives: Christ lives in me," he immediately adds the interpretation: "but the life I now live in the flesh, I live in faith on the son of God, who has loved me and given himself up for me." Here he substitutes for the mystic formula a description in which not only the completely personal figure of Christ is revived, but in which the subjective religious function is not mystically represented. Instead of the fusion of the *ego* with Christ, instead of completely passive absorption in him, instead of the mystical formula, there appears the language of the I-and-thou religion, the grateful contemplation of Christ's deed of love, the appropriation of his grace, conformity to his holy and loving will. This interpretation seems to me most significant, and

¹ Cf. my *Christus*, Tübingen, 1909.

² Cf. Reitzenstein, *Die hellenistischen Mysterienreligionen*, Leipzig, 1910.

it leads me to doubt whether that mystical formula actually fitly describes the inner life of the apostle. Is there not presented here one of those innumerable cases of adaptation to transmitted religious expression, which are at all times unavoidable in the church? Everyone who applies to himself a borrowed form of religious expression must accommodate it to his own experience. Has not Paul, too, here forced the Hellenistic formula into the mold of Israelitish-Christian piety?

At any rate, Gal. 2:20 furnishes a suggestion as to how even the Christ-mysticism may become vital in modern Christianity, of course with the renunciation of the strictly mystical form. This is the way that "John" has already traveled, for with him abiding in Christ no longer means real mystical blending, but a religion of belief on Christ with its accompanying moral life. To behold in the ideally transfigured Christ the grace and truth of God, to attain through him knowledge of God, to have him always before one's eyes as leader, to abide in his love, to do his commandments, and to abide as he did in the love of God (John 15:10)—this is the religion of "John." This concentration of the inner life upon the figure of Jesus, living with him, working with his mind, reflecting his being in one's own life—this is a form of the Christ-mysticism which is possible even for the modern man. In particular the expression "suffering with Christ" can never become meaningless in Christianity. Though it may indeed lose the mystical background of Paulinism, it will always remain the highest expression of Christianity. So we may say, even though modern Christianity will evaluate Jesus in terms of sonship to God and faith in God, as Jesus lived and taught it, yet we shall continue to feel that we are disciples of Jesus and servants of Christ, the last phrase signifying not so much metaphysical dependence on the exalted Lord who rules the world, as an ethical sense that we no longer live for ourselves but for him and for his work.

4. In conclusion we may briefly refer to the ethics of Paul. Although the ascetic, dualistic element makes the approach to it more difficult, although the abandonment of his characteristic eschatological emphasis means that many of his precepts can be adopted by us only with a new emphasis, nevertheless there remains

enough that is positive, enough manly strength, self-discipline, and heroism in the Pauline ethics to inspire modern Christians also to the task of world-transformation and the carrying out of God's will in the world. It is again especially the Stoic envelope about his ethics—his emphasis on freedom (I Cor. 6:12) and kingly dominion over the world (I Cor. 3:21 ff.), the Greek stress on certain requirements, e.g., *τιμή* (I Thess. 4:4) and *εὐσχημοσύνη* (I Cor. 7:35)—which can put iron into the anemic ethics of our time. Above all we are still far from sufficiently understanding or exhausting what Paul has to say of the love of our kind, to say nothing of what would result from putting his precepts into practice. The great abundance of manifold practical, sober, and wise admonitions, such as are found in I Cor. 13 and also in other *παρακλήσεις* (Rom., chap. 12; Col., chap. 3) have not yet been approximately realized—indeed have not yet been put into a convincing theoretical exposition. Had he said of love no more than this, “it rejoices not in unrighteousness; it rejoices in the truth,” we should have had even in that an ethical norm which cannot be surpassed in dignity and power. Of course all this stands with him under the sign: “I can do nothing without him who strengthens me, Christ.” All good that the Christian can have or do, “love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faith, meekness and self-control” (Gal. 5:22), is for Paul a fruit of the spirit, a miraculous work of the grace of God. It is fundamentally religious ethics, and accordingly must remain in Christianity. Though the modern Christian may make it less transcendent and less miraculous, yet as long as he still sets value on being a Christian he will also remain conscious that any doing of good is possible for him only if he continually keep himself in inner harmony with God, and with Christ: his love for the brethren will always be a reflection of the inwardly experienced love of God.